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## Psalm 9-10

Labuschagne, C.J.

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# Psalm 9-10— Logotechnical Analysis

## Guidelines

- Please read the [General Introduction](#) as well as the Introduction to [Book I](#).
- For common features found in the numerical analysis charts, see the "[Key to the charts](#)".

## Specific features of Psalm 9-10

- In the Masoretic tradition Psalms 9 and 10 are counted as two separate psalms, but there is ample evidence to show that they belong inextricably together to form a single poem. Unlike Psalms 7 and 40, which are indeed *composite* poems, the present psalm has been designed, in my judgement, as a *single* numerical composition. This also holds true for Psalm 42-43. The mere fact that Psalms 9 and 10 are counted as separate poems in MT is not sufficient to regard them as comprising two psalms. In fact, there is no cogent evidence indicating that they constitute a composite consisting of two originally independent poems. Therefore, it remains hard to explain why Psalms 9 and 10 were ever regarded as separate psalms in the Masoretic tradition.

Let me provide evidence to substantiate my view of Psalm 9-10 as a single entity:

1. The LXX understood the composite poem as a single composition, which is also the case in some Hebrew manuscripts.
2. Unlike the other 'nameless' psalms in (the 'Davidic') Book I (1, 2 and 33), whose lack of a heading can be explained, there is no explanation for the fact that Psalm 10 has no heading other than because it is structurally part of Psalm 9. In my judgement, the 'nameless' Psalm 1 was composed by the editor/composer of the Psalter as the introduction to Book I and to the entire Psalter and Psalm 2 to introduce the first group of Davidic psalms (3-8), while Psalm 33 was specifically composed to prelude the alphabetic acrostic Psalm 34 in the last group of Davidic psalms (32-41).
3. The *selah* at the end of Psalm 9 clearly indicates that this is not the end of the psalm; nowhere in the Psalter is a *selah* to be found at the bottom of a poem. In fact, in my opinion, the *selah* signifies the striking arithmetic middle of the twin psalms: **10:1**, its meaningful centre. This brings us to the most distinctive feature of the poem, its perfectly balanced structure, with the **7** words of **10:1** at the arithmetic centre. It is flanked by **156** (6 x **26**) words on either side  $319 = 156 + 7 + 156$ . Moreover, the meaningful centre coincides precisely with the *lamed*-verseline, as in several alphabetic acrostics – see the General Introduction, "The alphabetic acrostics". In addition, the Psalm 9-10 as a whole has **136** (8 x **17**) words after *atnach*.  
Finally, there is an exact parallel to be found in the twin psalms 111 and 112. Psalm 111 is made up of **72** words, while Psalm 112 has **77** words, altogether 149 words. Their mathematical centre is constituted by the **5** words in 112:1a, the meaningful centre of the twin psalms:  $149 = 72 + 5 + 72$ . For particulars, see my analysis of [Psalm 111](#).
4. There is no doubt about Psalm 9 being a partial alphabetic acrostic; the successive letters *aleph* through *kaph* are all present, except the *daleth*. Psalm 10 begins with a *lamedh*-verseline (v. 1a) and ends with verselines having the successive initial letters *qoph* (12a), *resh* (14a), *shin* (15a) and *taw* (17a). Such evident vestiges of an acrostic in Psalm 10 cannot simply be waved aside. The fact of the matter is that the composite poem as a whole is a *defective* alphabetic acrostic, and in my view, the defectiveness is not due to corruption of the text. The only corruption is the missing word with initial *tsadeh* in 10:10a, which can be restored – see below "Textcritical remarks".

In Ps. 9:9a the *heh* is present as the second letter of the initial word, which need not pose a problem (compare Nah. 1:7b). This means that the psalm really lacks only five letters: *daleth*, *mem*, *nun*, *samekh* and *ayin*. My explanation for the defectiveness is that these letters were deliberately omitted by the author in order to achieve a *hidden acrostic*. Taken in their normal alphabetic order, these five letters constitute the words דָּם נִסֵּעַ, 'the blood of a wayfarer'. This ingenious little acrostic may be interpreted as a subtle comment on the fact that YHWH is called 'the avenger of blood' (9:13), and more specifically, as an explication of the metaphor of the lion lurking in ambush to sieze an innocent *passer-by* (10:9-10). Therefore, we need not endeavour on our part to 'restore' the presumed corrupted alphabetic acrostic. See also my Analysis of [Psalm 34](#), where we find a comparable ingenious arrangement of the initial letters. For another example of a hidden acrostic, see Observation 2 in my Analysis of [Psalm 119](#).

5. In terms of the change in the direction of address, words directly addressed to God and words spoken about him, the 7 words of 10:1 are part of the *words addressed to God*, starting in 9:20-21 (the call on God to act) and ending in 10:1 (the question why he does not act). This means that there is no strong caesura between Psalm 9 and Psalm 10.
6. The unity of Psalm 9-10 as a single literary entity is additionally underscored by the coherence in thought content: the deliverance of the oppressed is the leading idea in both sections. Moreover, there are numerous verbal repetitions in the composition as a whole, which cannot be dismissed as coincidence. To mention only a few key-words, such as אָנוּשׁ, 'human being' (already preluded in Ps. 8:5a), reverberating here at the end of both sections (9:20a, 21b and 10:18b), דַּרְשׁ, 'seek' (9:11b, 9:13a, 10:4a, 10:13b and 10:15b), דָּוָד, 'the oppressed' (9:10a and 10:18a), and רָשָׁע, 'godless', which runs as a unifying thread through the entire poem (9:6, 17, 18, 10:2, 3, 4, 13, 15). For other verbal repetitions within the composition as a whole, see the fourteen additional examples mentioned by Van der Lugt (CAS, § 10.4.4).
7. As in many psalms with a bipartite structure, each of the two cantos of the psalm has its own meaningful centre on word level, in addition to the common meaningful centre in Ps. 10 :1. Therefore, this cannot be adduced as evidence for the existence of two poems.

## Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: || Sub-canto boundary |

- Van der Lugt: 9:2-3, 4-5, 6-7 | 8-9, 10-11, 12-13 | 14-15, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21 ||  
10:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 | 7-8b, 8c-9, 10-11 | 12-13, 14, 15-16, 17-18 (2 cantos (1 + 1) with 6 sub-cantos (3 + 3) and 20 2-verseline strophes (10 + 10), 40 verselines and 81 cola (taking only 10:5 as a tricolon and 10:8-9 as three bicolic verselines).
- Fokkelman: 9:2-3, 4-5 | 6-7 8-9 || 10-11, 12-13 || 14-15, 16-17 | 18-19, 20-21 ||  
10:1-2, 3-4 | 5-6, 7-8 || 9-11 || 12-13, 14 | 15-16, 17-18 (6 stanzas with 19 strophes, 39 verselines and 81 cola, taking 10:8 and 9 as tricola).
- Labuschagne: Like Van der Lugt, I find 2 cantos with 6 sub-cantos, 20 strophes, 40 verselines and 81 cola.
- Christensen includes the heading of Psalm 9 in the word-count and takes Psalm 10 as an independent composition - see his analysis on his website [www.bibal.net](http://www.bibal.net).
- For an overview of other divisions of the text, see Van der Lugt, CAS, Psalm 10, § 6.

## Logotechnical analysis of Psalm 9-10

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: words addressed to God; **d**: words spoken about God.
- The numbering of the verselines is shown in **brown**.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	Heading: לְמִנְצַחַת עֲלָמוֹת לְבֵן מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד:	5	5	0		
2	אֹדָה יִתְּנָה בְּכָל-לֵבִי א 1	4	4		4	
	אֶסְפָּרָה כָּל-נִפְלְאוֹתֶיהָ:	3		3	3	
	Total, v. 2	7	4	3	7	0
3	אֲשַׁמְּחָה וְאֶעֱלֶזָּה בָּהּ 2	3	3		3	
	אֲזַמְּרָה שְׁמִי עָלָיוֹן: עָלָיוֹן occurs only here and in Ps. 18:14	3		3	3	
	Total, v. 3	6	3	3	6	0
	Strophe 1 Total, v. 2-3	13	7	6	13	0
4	בְּשׁוּב-אוֹיְבֵי אֲחֹרֶּה ב 3	3	3		3	
	יְכַשְׁלוּ וַיֵּאבְדּוּ מִפָּנָיָהּ:	3		3	3	
	Total, v. 4	6	3	3	6	0
5	כִּי-עָשִׂיתָ מִשְׁפָּטִי וְדִינִי 4	4	4		4	
	יִשְׁבֹּתָ לְכֶסֶף שׁוֹפֵט צָדִיק:	4		4	4	
	Total, v. 5	8	4	4	8	0
	Strophe 2 Total, v. 4-5	14	7	7	14	0
6	גַּעֲרַתְּ גּוֹיִם אֶבְדָּתָּ רָשָׁע 5 ג	4	4		4	
	שָׁמָּה מַחִיתָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:	4		4	4	
	Total, v. 6	8	4	4	8	0
7	הָאוֹיֵב תִּמּוּ חֲרָבוֹת לְנֹצֶחַ 6	4	4		4	
	וְעָרִים נִתְּשָׁתָּ אֶבֶד זִכְרָם הִמָּה:	5	2		5	
	Total, v. 7	9	6	3	9	0
	Strophe 3 Total, v. 6-7	17	10	7	17	0
	Sub-canto I.1 Total, v. 2-7	44	24	20	44	0
8	זִיָּתְנָה לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁבֹּחַ 7	3	3			3
	כּוֹנֵן לַמִּשְׁפָּט כֶּסֶף:	3		3		3
	Total, v. 8	6	3	3	0	6
9	חֲוָה יִשְׁפֹּט-תָּבֵל בְּצִדִּיק 8 ח	4	4			4
	יִדִּין לְאֻמִּים בְּמִישְׁרֵיהֶם:	3		3		3
	Total, v. 9	7	4	3	0	7
	Strophe 4 Total, v. 8-9	13	7	6	0	13
	Total, v. 6-9	30	17	13	17	13

10	וַיְהִי יְהוָה מְשֹׁנֵב לְדָדָּהּ מְשֹׁנֵב לְעֵתוֹת בְּצָרָהּ: Total, v. 10	9 ו	4	4		4
			3		3	3
			7	=	4 + 3	= 0 + 7
11	וַיִּבְטְחוּ בָּהּ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֹהּ כִּי לֹא־עֲזָבָתָהּ דָּרְשִׁיף יְהוָה: Total, v. 11	10	4	4	4	
			5		5	5
			9	=	4 + 5	= 9 + 0
	Strophe 5 Total, v. 10-11		16	=	8 + 8	= 9 + 7
	Total, v. 8-11		29	=	15 + 14	= 9 + 20
	Total, v. 6-11		46	=	25 + 21	= 26 + 20
	Total, v. 5-11		54	=	29 + 25	= 34 + 20
12	וַיִּזְכְּרוּ לִיהוָה יֹשֵׁב צִיּוֹן Middle words תְּגִידוּ בְּעַמִּים עֲלִילוֹתָיו: of Psalm 9: 156 = 77 + 2 + 77 Total, v. 12 Middle colon: 43 = 22 + 1 + 22 Total, v. 8-12	11 ז	4	4		4
			3		3	3
			7	=	4 + 3	= 0 + 7
			36	=	19 + 17	= 9 + 27
13	כִּי־דָרַשׁ דָּמִים אוֹתָם זָכָרָהּ לֹא־שָׁכַח צַעֲקַת עֲנָוִים: Total, v. 13	12	5	5		5
			4		4	4
			9	=	5 + 4	= 0 + 9
	Strophe 6 Total, v. 12-13		16	=	9 + 7	= 0 + 16
	Total, v. 10-13		32	=	17 + 15	= 9 + 23
	Sub-canto I.2 Total, v. 8-13		45	=	24 + 21	= 9 + 36
	Total, v. 6-13		62	=	34 + 28	= 26 + 36
14	חֲנֻנִי יְהוָה רָאָה עֲנִי מִשְׁנֵאֵי מְרוֹמָמִי מִשְׁעָרֵי מָוֶת: Total, v. 14	13 ח	5	5	5	
			3		3	3
			8	=	5 + 3	= 8 + 0
15	לְמַעַן אֲסַפְּרָה כָּל־תְּהִלָּתֶיךָ בְּשַׁעְרֵי בֵּת־צִיּוֹן אֲגִידָה בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ: Total, v. 15	14	4	4	4	
			2		3	5
			9	=	7 + 2	= 9 + 0
	Strophe 7 Total, v. 14-15		17	=	12 + 5	= 17 + 0
	Total, v. 13-15		26	=	17 + 9	= 17 + 9
	Total, v. 11-15		42	=	25 + 17	= 26 + 16
16	טָבְעוּ גוֹיִם בְּשַׁחַת עֲשׂוּיָהּ בְּרִשְׁתָּ־זוֹ טָמְנוּ גִלְבָּדָה רִגְלָם: Total, v. 16	15 ט	4	4		4
			5		5	5
			9	=	4 + 5	= 0 + 9
17	נוֹדַע יְהוָה מִשְׁפָּט עֲשָׂה בַּפֶּעַל כַּפּוֹ נֹקֵשׁ רָשָׁע תְּגִיזוֹן סֶלָה: Total, v. 17	16	4	4		4
			4		4	4
			8	=	8 + 0	= 0 + 8
	Strophe 8 Total, v. 16-17		17	=	12 + 5	= 0 + 17
	Total, v. 14-17		34	=	24 + 10	= 17 + 17
	Total, v. 8-17		79	=	48 + 31	= 26 + 53
	Total, v. 2-17		123	=	72 + 51	= 70 + 53

18	יִשְׁבּוּ רָשָׁעִים לְשֹׂאוֹלָהּ כָּל־גּוֹיִם שָׁכְחֵי אֱלֹהִים: Total, v. 18	17 י 3 3 4 4 7 = 3 + 4 = 0 + 7	3 4 7
19	כִּי לֹא לְנֶצַח יִשְׁכַּח אֲבִיוֹן תִּקְנֹת עֲנִיִּים תֹּאבֵד לָעַד: Total, v. 19	18 כ 5 5 4 4 9 = 5 + 4 = 0 + 9	5 4 9
	Strophe 9 Total, v. 18-19 Total, v. 14-19	16 = 8 + 8 = 0 + 16 50 = 32 + 18 = 17 + 33	16 33
20	קוֹמָה יְהוָה אֶל־יַעֲזֹ אֲנוּשׁ יִשְׁפֹּטוּ גּוֹיִם עַל־פָּנָיִךְ: Total, v. 20	19 5 5 5 4 4 4 9 = 5 + 4 = 9 + 0	5 4 0
21	נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה יְהוָה מוֹרָה לָהֶם יִדְעוּ גּוֹיִם אֲנוּשׁ הִמָּה סֵלָה: Total, v. 21	20 4 4 4 4 2 4 8 = 6 + 2 = 8 + 0	4 4 0
	Strophe 10 Total, v. 20-21 Sub-canto I.3 Total, v. 14-21 Total, v. 12-21	17 = 11 + 6 = 17 + 0 67 = 43 + 24 = 34 + 33 83 = 52 + 31 = 34 + 69	0 33 69
	Canto I Total, v. 2-21	156 = 91 + 65 = 87 + 69	69
10:1	Middle words: לָמָּה יְהוָה תַּעֲמֹד בְּרַחוּק תַּעֲלִים לַעֲתוֹת בַּצָּרָה: Meaningful centre of the psalm Total, v. 1:	21 4 4 4 3 3 3 7 = 4 + 3 = 7 + 0	4 3 0
2	בְּנֹאֲוֹת רָשָׁע יִדְלַק עָנִי יִתְפָּשׂוּ בְּמִזְמוֹת זֹו חֲשָׁבוּ: Total, v. 2:	22 4 4 4 4 4 4 8 = 4 + 4 = 0 + 8	4 4 8
3	כִּי־הִלֵּל רָשָׁע עַל־תַּאֲוֹת נַפְשׁוֹ וּבִצֵּעַ בִּרְךְּ נֶאֱץ יְהוָה: Total, v. 3:	23 6 6 6 4 4 4 10 = 6 + 4 = 0 + 10	6 4 10
4	רָשָׁע כְּגִבֹּה אָפוּ בִלְיִדְרֵשׁ אֵין אֱלֹהִים כָּל־מִזְמוֹתָיו: Total, v. 4: Total, v. 1-4:	24 5 5 5 4 4 4 9 = 5 + 4 = 0 + 9 34 = 19 + 15 = 7 + 27	5 4 9 27
5	יַחֲלֹו דְרָכָיו בְּכָל־עַת מָרוֹם מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ מִנְּגִדֹי כָּל־צוֹרָרָיו יִפִּיחַ בָּהֶם: Total, v. 5:	25 4 4 4 3 3 3 4 4 4 11 = 7 + 4 = 3 + 8	4 3 4 8
6*	אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ כֹּל־אֲמוּטָה לְדֹר וָדֹר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־בָרַע: [אֵלֶּה] *סֵלָה Total, v. 6: Total, v. 5-6: Total, v. 3-6: Total, v. 2-6:	26 4 4 4 5 5 5 9 = 4 + 5 = 0 + 9 20 = 11 + 9 = 3 + 17 39 = 22 + 17 = 3 + 36 47 = 26 + 21 = 3 + 44	4 5 9 17 36 44
	Sub-canto II.1 Total, v. 1-6:	54 = 30 + 24 = 10 + 44	44

7*	פִּיהוּ מְלֵא וּמִרְמוֹת וְתִדָּה	27	5/4	5/4	5/4
	תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנוֹ עֵמֶל וְאֵנוֹן:		4	4	4
	Total, v. 7:	9/8	=	5/4 + 4	= 0 + 9/8
8ab	יָשָׁב בְּמִאֲרֵב חֲצָרִים	28	3	3	3
	בְּמִסְתָּרִים יִהְיֶה נֶקִּי(א):		3	3	3
8c-9a	עֵינָיו לְחִלָּה יִצְפְּנוּ(:)	29	3		3
	יֵאָרֵב בְּמִסְתָּר כְּאֲרִיָּה בְּסֻכָּה:		4	4	4
9bc	יֵאָרֵב לְחִטּוֹף עֲנִי	30	3	3	3
	יִחְטֹף עֲנִי בְּמִשְׁכּוֹ בְּרִשְׁתּוֹ: Middle words of Ps. 10		4	4	4
10*	163 = 78 + 7 + 78	31	2/3	2/3	2/3
	וְנִפְלַ בְּעֲצוּמָיו [חִלָּכָאִים] *חִיל כָּאִים:		3/4	3/4	3/4
	Total, v. 10:	5/7	=	3 + 4	= 0 + 5/7
11	אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ שָׁכַח אֱלֹהִים	32	4	4	4
	הִסְתִּיר פָּנָיו בִּלְ-רְאָה לְנִצָּח:		5	5	5
	Total, v. 11:	9	=	4 + 5	= 0 + 9
	Sub-canto II.2 Total, v. 7-11:	43/44	=	24 + 19/20	= 0 + 43/44
12	קִוְיָה יִהְיֶה אֵל נִשְׂא יִדָּה	33	5	5	5
	אֶל-תִּשְׁכַּח עֲנִיִּים:		3	3	3
	Total, v. 12:	8	=	5 + 3	= 8 + 0
13	עַל-מָה נֶאֱמַר רָשָׁע אֱלֹהִים	34	5	5	5
	אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ לֹא תִדְרֹשׁ:		4	4	4
	Total, v. 13:	9	=	5 + 4	= 9 + 0
	Total, v. 12-13:	17	=	10 + 7	= 17 + 0
14	רָאִתָּה כִּי-אֲתָה עֵמֶל וְכַעַס	35	5	5	5
	תִּבְטֵא לְתַת בִּידָךְ		3	3	3
	עָלֶיךָ יַעֲזֹב חִלָּכָה	36	3	3	3
	יָתוּם אֲתָה תִּיֵּית עֲזֹר:		4	4	4
	Total, v. 14:	15	=	11 + 4	= 15 + 0
15	שֹׁבֵר זְרוּעַ רָשָׁע	37	3	3	3
	וְרָע תִּדְרֹשׁ-רָשָׁעוֹ בִּלְ-תִּמְצָא:		5	5	5
	Total, v. 15:	8	=	3 + 5	= 8 + 0
	Total, v. 12-15:	40	=	24 + 16	= 40 + 0
16	יִהְיֶה מֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם וָעֶד	38	4	4	4
	אֶבְרִי גּוֹיִם מִאֲרָצוֹ:		3	3	3
	Total, v. 16:	7	=	4 + 3	= 0 + 7
	Total, v. 14-16:	30	=	18 + 12	= 23 + 7



17	תֵּאֱזָנֶה עֲנִיִּים שְׁמַעַתְּ יְהוָה	39	4	4	4
	תִּכְנֶן לָבָם תִּקְשִׁיב אֲזָנֶיךָ:		4	4	4
	Total, v. 17:	8	= 4 + 4	= 8 + 0	
18	לִשְׁפֹט יְתוֹם וְיָדָה	40	3	3	3
	בֶּל-יוֹסִיף עוֹדָה לְעַרְץ אֲנֹשׁ מִן-הָאָרֶץ:		7	3	4
	Total, v. 18:	10	= 6 + 4	= 10 + 0	
	Total, v. 16-18:	25	= 14 + 11	= 18 + 7	
Sub-canto II.3	Total, v. 12-18:	65	= 38 + 27	= 58 + 7	
Canto II	Total, v. 2-18:	155/156	= 88+ 67/68	= 61+ 94/95	
	Total, v. 1-18:	162/163	= 92+ 70/71	= 68+ 94/95	
	With סָלָה (1x*):	163/164	= 92+ 71/72	= 68+ 95/96	
	Canto I-II Grand Total, 9:2 - 10:18:	318/319	= 183+ 135/136	= 155+ 163/164	
	With the heading, 9:1 – 10:18:	323/324	= 188+ 135/136		
	With סָלָה (3x*) and הַנִּיּוֹן (1x):	327/328	= 188+ 139/140		

## Textcritical remarks

\* The word-count of the corrected text is highlighted. In order to resolve the textcritical problems in 10:7 and 10:10, I venture to put forward the following suggestions:

- First, regarding the problematic אָלָה, 'curse', in 10:7a, I follow Van der Lugt (CAS, § 10.1) in removing this word from v. 7, transferring it to the end of v. 6 and changing it to סָלָה, which was most probably the original reading.
- Second, in 10:10b I follow the Qere of the Masoretes, reading two words חֵיל בָּאִים, 'host of dejected persons', (cf. LXX), instead of the one word in MT, חֵלְבָאִים, 'unfortunate persons' (see BHS). The effect on the word count can be seen in the chart.
- Finally, in 10:10a I follow the Qere reading יִדְכֶּה, 'he strikes'. More importantly, I also insert the obviously missing word beginning with a *tsadeh*, in v.10a, which in my opinion is יִצְוֵר, 'he hunts' (from the verb צוּר). The *tsadeh* is not the initial letter, but in light of Ps. 9:9, where the *heh*-word is preceded by a waw: וְהוּא, this poses no problem (compare also Nah. 1:7b).

Of all earlier suggestions, Brigg's proposal to insert the verb צוּר - more correctly the imperfect form יִצְוֵר - makes the best sense in the context of the vivid description of the predatory onslaught by the godless on the poor: "He hunts (him), strikes (him), crouches (over him)", which is a perfect depiction of the hunting lion in vs. 8-9. Moreover, this verb occurs together with אָרַב, 'lurk, lie in wait' (vs. 9, 'like a lion') in a comparable context in Micah 7:2 and, more importantly, in Job 38: 39-40, where the lion is explicitly mentioned and where we find all three verbs occurring in Psalm 9: not only אָרַב, 'lurk', and צוּר, 'hunt', but also שָׁחָה, 'crouch'.

- The proposed corrections do not only restore the letters of the alphabetic acrostic in vs. 7 and 10, but also the numerical structure which was negatively effected by the loss of the word אָלָה in vs. 7a. In this way, the 163 words of Psalm 10 are maintained, and its logotechnical structure, as well as that of the entire poem, is considerably improved. And what is more, the correction in 10:7a also restores the 7-word arithmetic centre of Psalm 10 (vs. 9b-10a)!

In my judgement, the two corrections proposed above bring us closer than ever to what the final author/editor had in mind.

## Observations

- In terms of the 319 words of the psalm, the middle word is בָּרְחוֹק, 'far off', but the 7 words of 10:1 constitute the arithmetic centre. They are flanked by exactly 156 (6 x 26) words on either side (319 = 156 + 7 + 156).

לָמָּה יִתְּוֶה תַעֲמֹד בָּרְחוֹק ^ תַעֲלִים לְעֵתוֹת בְּצָרָה

Why, YHWH, do you stand far off? // Why hide away in times of trouble?



The pressing question why God does not act, constitutes a very meaningful centre for a prayer for deliverance of the oppressed. The problem of the presumed 'aloofness' of God is strongly reminiscent of Psalm 73, where the two notions 'far from God' and 'near God' function as a structuring device – see my Analysis of Psalm 73.

It is important to note that the arithmetic centre of the poem coincides with the *lamedh*-verseline at the middle of the alphabetic acrostic, which normally falls between the letters *kaph* and *lamed*, so that the middle verseline is either the *kaph*- or the *lamedh* verseline – see the General Introduction, "The alphabetic acrostics".

In terms of the 81 cola of the poem, the middle colon coincides exactly with the arithmetic centre ( $81 = 40 + 1 + 40$ ), which highlights the meaningful centre on word level in yet another way.

2. Each of the two sections of the psalm has its own meaningful centre. In Psalm 9, the two middle words are **הַגִּידוּ בָּעַמִּים**, 'proclaim among the nations', in 12b ( $156 = 77 + 2 + 77$ ).
3. The meaningful centre of Psalm 10 is constituted by the **7** words (once again **7**!) in vs. 9c-10a ( $163 = 78 + 7 + 78$ ), which are flanked by **78** ( $3 \times 26$ ) words on either side.

**יִחַטֵּף עָנִי בְּמַשְׁכּוֹ בְּרֶשֶׁתוֹ : יִצּוֹר יִדְכֶּה יֶשֶׁחַ**

He seizes the poor, drags him away in his net // hunts, strikes, crouches (over him).

The metaphor of the hunting lion, lying in ambush for a passer-by, is a most fitting meaningful centre for this part of the poem.

4. The division of the text into words directly addressed to God and words spoken about him appears to have been employed to weave extra divine name numbers into the text:\*

9:6-7	<b>17</b> words addressed to God
9:6-11	<b>26</b> words addressed to God
9:14-15	<b>17</b> words addressed to God
9:11-15	<b>26</b> words addressed to God
9:14-17	<b>17</b> words spoken about God
9:8-17	<b>26</b> words addressed to God
9:20-21	<b>17</b> words addressed to God
10:5-6	<b>17</b> words spoken about God
10:4-6	<b>26</b> words spoken about God
10:7-8	<b>17</b> words spoken about God
10:12-13	<b>17</b> words addressed to God
10:1-18	<b>68</b> ( $4 \times 17$ ) words addressed to God.

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\* Van der Lugt counts 180 words addressed to God (CAS, § 10.5), while I find 155, because I do not reckon 10:2 as addressed to God, neither 10:5-6, but only 10:5b (see the chart, Column c).

5. Additionally, there are a considerable number of occurrences of the divine name numbers woven into the text in terms of the division by *atnach*:

9:6-7	<b>17</b> words in total
9:4-7	<b>17</b> words before <i>atnach</i>
9:6-9	<b>17</b> words before <i>atnach</i>
9:8-12	<b>17</b> words after <i>atnach</i>
9:10-13	<b>17</b> words before <i>atnach</i>
9:6-13	<b>34</b> (2 x <b>17</b> ) words before <i>atnach</i>
9:13-15	<b>26</b> words in total, with <b>17</b> before <i>atnach</i>
9:11-15	<b>17</b> words after <i>atnach</i>
9:2-17	<b>51</b> (3 x <b>17</b> ) words after <i>atnach</i>
9:12-21	<b>52</b> (2 x <b>26</b> ) words before <i>atnach</i>
9:2-21	<b>156</b> (6 x <b>26</b> ) words in total
10:1-4	<b>34</b> (2 x <b>17</b> ) words in total
10:3-6	<b>17</b> words after <i>atnach</i>
10:2-6	<b>26</b> words before <i>atnach</i>
10:7-8	<b>17</b> words in total
10:2-18	<b>156</b> (6 x <b>26</b> ) words in total, with <b>68</b> (4 x <b>17</b> ) after <i>atnach</i>
9:2 – 10:18	<b>136</b> (8 x <b>17</b> ) words after <i>atnach</i> .

6. The word שִׁמְךָ, 'your name', occurs twice in Psalm 9 (vs. 3b and 11a) and seems to be used as a unifying key-word to link Psalm 9 with Psalms 7 and 8 – see Ps. 7:18 and Ps. 8:2,10. The same holds true for the designation עֲלִיּוֹן, 'Most High', in 9:3b, with regard to Psalm 7, where it occurs in v. 18. See Observation 6 in my Analysis of [Psalm 7](#). It is an important key-word, occurring **22** times in the Psalter: **17x** in Books I-III (of which **7** instances are to be found in the Asaphite psalms, 73-83 – see Observations 1 and 2 in my Analysis of [Psalm 78](#)) and **5x** in Books IV and V.
7. The name יְהוָה occurs 9x in Psalm 9 (9:2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 20 and 21) and 5x in Psalm 10 (10:1, 3, 10, 12 and 17), together **14** times. Significantly enough, there are **52** (2 x **26**) occurrences altogether in Psalms 1-10, with **17** in Psalms 6-8 and **26** in Psalms 6-9. See Observation 7 in my Analysis of [Psalm 7](#), and for particulars, see the [General Introduction](#), "The name YHWH woven into the fabric of the text", and particularly Table I in the Introduction to [Book I](#).

The word אֱלֹהִים occurs 3x (9:18, 10:4 and 13) and אֵל 2x (10:11 and 12). The divine title עֲלִיּוֹן, 'Most High', occurs 1x (v. 3b). The only other instance in this sub-group (Psalms 9-18) is to be found in Ps. 18:14b. The two occurrences function as a literary device for inclusion to delimit the psalms in this sub-group.

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Dr. C.J. Labuschagne      Senior Lecturer in Semitic Languages (retired),  
Brinkhorst 44              University of Pretoria, South Africa  
9751 AT Haren (Gron)      and  
The Netherlands          Professor of Old Testament (retired),  
[labuschagne.cj@gmail.com](mailto:labuschagne.cj@gmail.com)      University of Groningen, The Netherlands